

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Close et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,411,069, "Close"). Such rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1 and 4 have been amended herein to set forth a novel and unobvious vegetation trimmer head and a vegetation trimmer apparatus including such trimmer head that are neither disclosed, suggested nor rendered obvious by Close. In specific, claims 1 and 4 now require that the tapered chambers within which the recited semi-annular cleat members are reciprocally guided are substantially frustoconical in configuration. The substantially frustoconical shape of the cleat chamber defines a tapered three dimensional space surrounding the trimmer line passageway. Hence, when a flexible and relatively compressible vegetation cutting member or trimmer line is inserted into the trimmer head, the compression spring or other biasing means urges the semi-annular cleat members to apply gripping force to substantially the entire circumference of the trimmer line.

In contrast, the opposed clamping jaws 84 and 86 of Close present planar, vertical trimmer line contact faces that provide little more than limited tangential contact to opposed sides of the circumference of the trimmer line.

Assuming essentially equal biasing force, when Applicant's semi-annular cleat members are wedged inwardly by the three-

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dimensional substantially frustoconical walls of the chamber, a greater area of surface contact arises between the semi-annular cleat members and the trimmer line than is achievable by the straight upright faces of Close's clamping jaws. This is not an insignificant difference between the two devices.

The inherent clamping deficiencies brought about by the two-dimensional planar clamping faces of the Close clamping members inescapably hinder the Close device from clamping trimmer line as effectively as the vegetation trimmer heads defined in Applicant's amended independent claims 1 and 4. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding Section 102 (b) rejection of those claims and their dependent claims 2, 3, 5 and 6 be withdrawn.

Claims 1-6 stand further rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-18 of U.S. Patent No. 6,581,292.

Responsive thereto, enclosed is a terminal disclaimer under 37 C.F.R. § 1.321(c) which is believed to obviate this rejection. Also enclosed is a check (no. 212473) to cover the fee associated with filing of the terminal disclaimer (37 C.F.R. § 1.20(d)).

In view of the foregoing, the instant application is believed to be in condition for allowance and, therefore, early issuance thereof is earnestly solicited.

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If the Examiner believes that a telephone interview would be beneficial to advance prosecution of the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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John F. Letchford
Registration No. 33,328

ARCHER & GREINER, P.C.
One Centennial Square
Haddonfield, NJ 08033
Tel.: (856) 354-3013
Fax: (856) 795-0574
Email: jletchford@archerlaw.com

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